

radical librarianship: the politics and mechanics of  
DIY culture, and how librarianship might be able to  
learn from grassroots organisation



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\* **E-Resources Librarian at the University of Bath**

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\* **Subject Librarian at the University of ~~Bath~~ Huddersfield**

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\* **Assistant at Leeds Metropolitan University, University  
of Sheffield, University of Derby**

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*Education and qualifications*

MSc Library & Information Studies, Merit, Aberystwyth University (2013)  
BA (Hons) English Studies – First class degree, Sheffield Hallam University (2004)  
3 A-levels – English: A; Biology: B; Business Studies: C (2001)  
10 GCSEs A-C including English Literature: A; Mathematics: B; Science (double award): A, A (1999)

*Employment history*

University of Bath, Information Librarian (E-Resources), November 2013 - (present)

- Liaising with publishers, aggregators and content providers;
- Managing electronic accessibility to library holdings through link resolver and EZ Proxy administration;
- Subscribing to and purchasing access to electronic materials for the University;
- Administering the serials, packages and databases renewals cycles;
- Harvesting and maintaining usage statistics for subscribed journals and databases;
- Consultation regarding commercial aspects of scholarly communication;
- Line management of two colleagues in the adjacent print periodicals team;
- Panel member of the JUSP Community User Group
- Member of the University's Ginger Group for Open Access

University of Huddersfield, Subject Librarian, May 2012 - October 2013

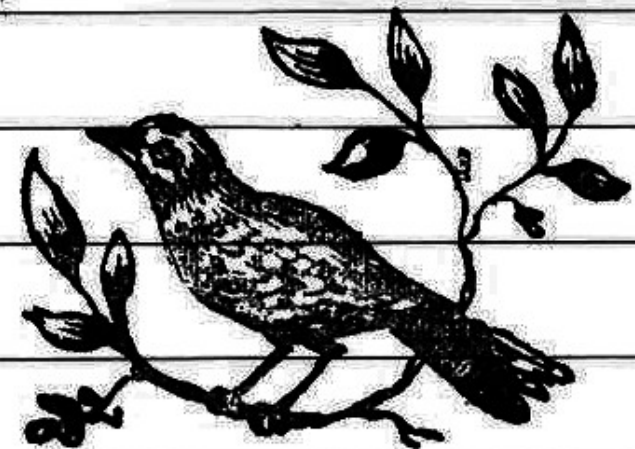
- Collection and budget management;
- Pedagogically informed information literacy and skills teaching;
- Reference tuition;
- Academic liaison;
- Supervision of assistant colleagues

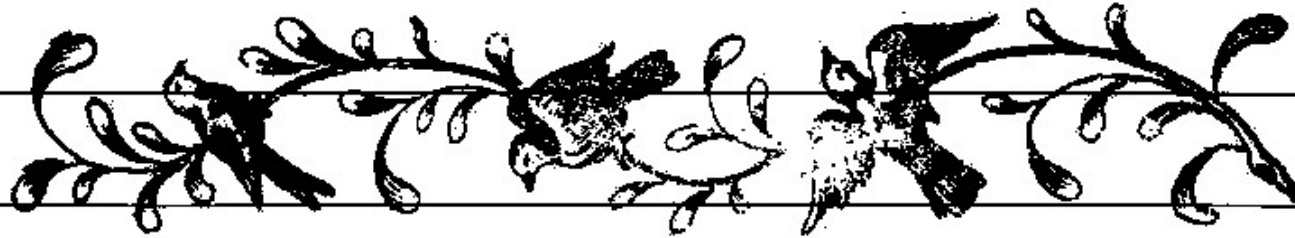
University of Huddersfield, Library Assistant, May 2010 - October 2013

- Supporting using education and orient
- Ordering physical resources, including book and AV materials;
- Scheduling recording of AV material for local streaming access

Leeds Metropolitan University, Senior Information Assistant (Oct 2008 – March 2010)

- Administering print periodicals subscriptions and acquisitions;
- User support on the i-point Help Desk (circulation issues)





... but identity and approaches to work etc. are  
more profoundly developed by my interests ~~and~~  
and activities from outside the profession



"liberalism functions as hegemonic ideology ... Within liberalism, differences can always be subsumed into (the) universally appealing ..."

(Seale, 2016)





"The world does not contain any information. It is as it is. Information about it is created in the organism through its interaction with the world. To speak about storage of information outside the human body is a semantic trap. Books or computers~~x~~ are part of the world. They can yield information when looked upon. We move the problem of learning and cognition~~x~~ nicely into the blind spot of our intellectual vision if we confuse vehicles for potential information with information itself. We do the same when we confuse data for potential decisions with decision itself.

(Illich, 1973)

\* Radical Librarians Collective

\* Formation and context

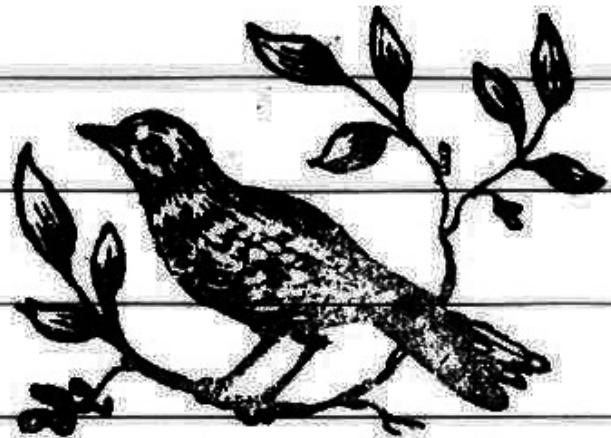
\* Participation

\* "There's always an alternative to the alternative"

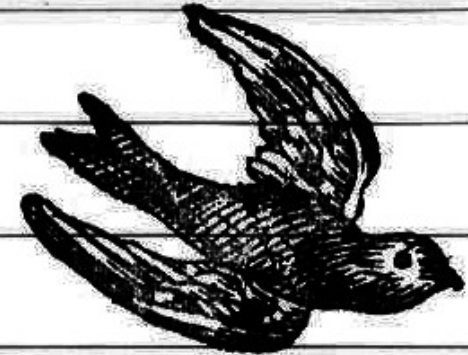
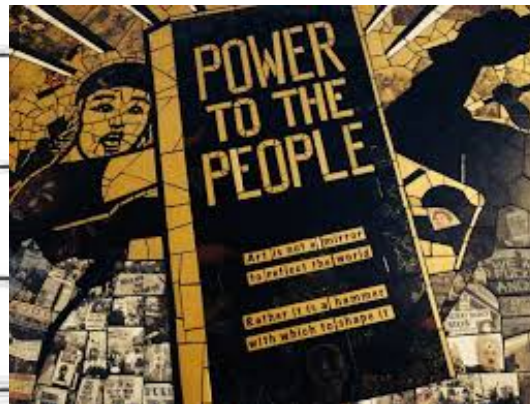
\* Decentralisation as practice

\* Practical engagement

\* Structure, imperfection, and the lack of utopia



## Formation and context



Political context

Social media

Local/regional alignment

Radical Reference,  
Progressive Librarians  
Guild etc.



Participation, identities,  
and subjectivities

Trade Unionists

Punks and DIYers

Hunt saboteurs

Skateboarders

Social centre/co-operative  
workers

Young

Non-binary

LGBTQI \*

Alternative ideas

Marginalised voices

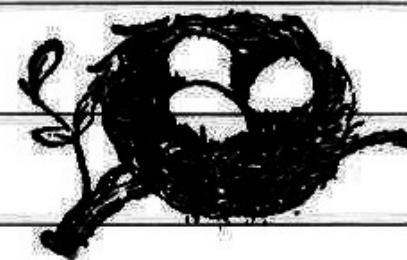
Community: resilience

Proactive





Bradford, 2013



London, 2014



Huddersfield, 2015





Brighton, 2016

**RADICAL LIBRARIANS  
COLLECTIVE**

**NATIONAL MEETING**

**BRIGHTON**

**9<sup>TH</sup>  
JULY  
2016**



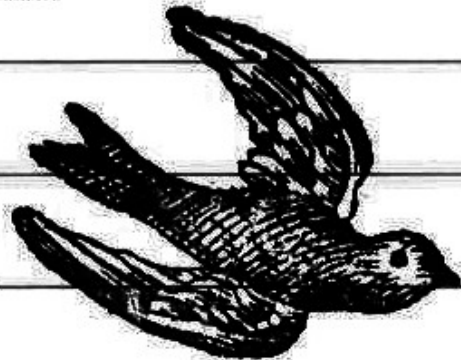


# Safer space policy

\* Borrowed from OK Cafe's policy

\* Read out at every meeting

\* Collective responsibility



## SAFER SPACES POLICY

Our Safer Spaces policy has been borrowed from our friends at Manchester's [OK Cafe](#). However, it relies on us all reflexively approaching our conduct towards one another as basic tenet of the *Radical Librarians Collective*'s culture is respect. We need to ensure that we respect each other – our backgrounds, identities, ideas and bodies – and respect the space that we have created together, be that online or offline. So:

- Everyone has an equal right to be heard and an equal responsibility to listen (people who are used to talking may feel the benefit of listening more, and vice versa).
- Respect and look after the building as a physical space and a resource for all.
- However strongly you feel about a particular topic, resist abusive discussions.
- Any behaviour – physical or verbal – that demeans, marginalises or dominates others, or perpetuates hierarchies, is not welcome.
- Identify your own privileges – the things that sometimes give you an easier ride than others – and actively challenge them.
- Be aware of the range of different identities (gender, race, class) that people may identify with, and avoid making generalisations, or assumptions about people.
- Be aware that anyone in the space could be a survivor of a particular form of oppression, for example, violence or racism.
- If someone is feeling uncomfortable, do not hesitate to raise this.
- It is everyone's responsibility to challenge prejudice and oppression, and if we ignore it we are complicit in it.

This list is not intended to be exhaustive. It is our responsibility to help create a space where everyone feels safe and included. If anyone would like the list to be amended, we encourage you to contact us help us to make our space safer for the collective good.

We encourage and support groups that may wish to create a temporary safe space, meeting space or workshop space for a particular group.



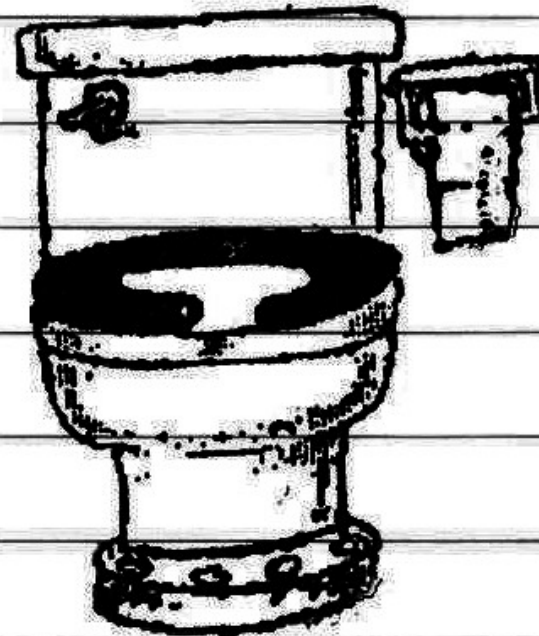
"There's always an alternative to the alternative"

"The Master's tools will never dismantle the Master's  
house."

(Lorde, 1984)

## Decentralisation as practice

- \* Conscious removal of centrality
- \* Limiting potential, homogenisation, power, and control
- \* Autonomy, openness
- \* Hierarchies, begone
- \* Regional groups





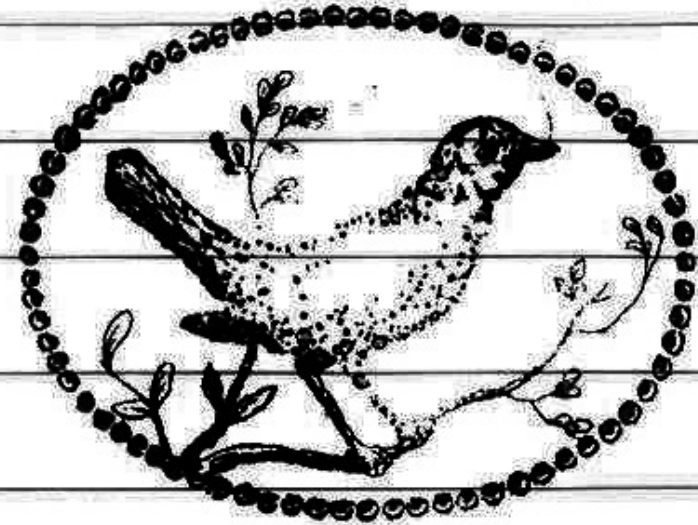
## Regional groups

\* Oxford

\* London and the South East

\* Yorkshire

\* Ireland (@RadLibsIreland)



Linking with communities outside the professional  
sphere

\* 1 in 12; LARC; Cowley Club

\* LARC: actively involved in organisation;  
recatalogued bookstock; collection development;  
reworking physical space

~~XXXXXXXXXX~~

\* The Feminist Library: RLC invited to speak

\* London Anarchist Bookfair; session on RLC in 2015

\* Mozfest 2015: Library Freedom Project & Radical  
Librarians Collective

~~"That's exactly why privileged~~



"That's exactly why privileged fucks like me  
should feel obliged to whine and kick and scream  
until everyone has everything they need"

<sup>n</sup>  
(Propagandhi, 'Resisting tyrannical government', 1996)

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